

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Brian Tumm on 06 March 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 14 has been amended to insert the following immediately after "claim 10 in which ", --each said reinforcing member has a channel-shaped cross section with reinforcing member flanges extending along both longitudinal edges of the web portion, and--.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As to claim 10, lines 34-36, the closest prior art of Straub (U.S. 5,273,322) discloses the claimed pipe coupling with the exception that the web portion of each of the reinforcing members is in surface-to-surface contact with a planar surface of a respective the radially projecting flange of the tubular casing. It would break the functioning of the tensioning means of the pipe coupling of Straub to reposition the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members such that the web portion were to be in surface-to-surface contact with the shown planar surface,

since the free ends of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members are positioned into the corners formed at the ends of the shown planar surfaces of Straub and locked into the corners preventing collapse of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members when the bolts are tightened.

As to claim 25, lines 3-5, the closest prior art of Straub (U.S. 5,273,322) discloses the claimed pipe coupling with the exception that the a tubular casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip. Adding the feature of free ends to the tubular casing of the pipe coupling of Straub would result in a lack of functioning of the reinforcing members of Straub, since there would be transmittal of tensioning forces to the tubular casing. Further, the closest prior art of Straub discloses the claimed pipe coupling with the exception of the structural limitations, recited in lines 26-32 of claim 25, that the reinforcing members each includes a reinforcing member flange extending along a longitudinal edge of the web portion that is nearest to the axis of the coupling so that the longitudinal edge where the web portion and the reinforcing member flange directly adjoin bears against a region on an outer surface of said tube of the tubular casing. It would break the functioning of the tensioning means of the pipe coupling of Straub to reposition the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members such that the web portion were to be in surface-to-surface contact with the shown planar surface, since the free ends of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members are positioned into the corners formed at the ends of the shown planar surfaces of Straub and locked into the corners preventing collapse of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members when the bolts are tightened.

As to claim 30, lines 3-5, the closest prior art of Straub (U.S. 5,273,322) discloses the claimed pipe coupling with the exception that the a tubular casing comprising a strip of metal formed into a tube with a gap extending longitudinally of the casing between free ends of the strip. Adding the feature of free ends to the tubular casing of the pipe coupling of Straub would result in a lack of functioning of the reinforcing members of Straub, since there would be transmittal of tensioning forces to the tubular casing. Further, the closest prior art of Straub discloses the claimed pipe coupling with the exception of the structural limitations, recited in lines 20-25 of claim 30, that the reinforcing members are configured for placement substantially in alignment with the through holes of the respective outwardly projecting flanges when the web portion of each the reinforcing member is placed into surface-to-surface contact with the planar surface of a respective projecting flange. It would break the functioning of the tensioning means of the pipe coupling of Straub to reposition the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members such that the web portion were to be in surface-to-surface contact with the shown planar surface, since the free ends of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members are positioned into the corners formed at the ends of the shown planar surfaces of Straub and locked into the corners preventing collapse of the generally rounded C-shaped reinforcing members when the bolts are tightened.

There is no teaching or suggestion, absent the applicant's own disclosure, for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the adapter assembly of Straub (U.S. 5,273,322) to have the above mentioned features.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

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fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAY R. RIPLEY whose telephone number is (571)272-7535. The examiner can normally be reached on 01:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jay R Ripley/
Examiner, Art Unit 3679
06 March 2008